

THRILLING, BITTER-SWEET CONFESSIONS

No.1 1½



LOVE

DRAMAS

A MAN CAN BE CRUEL!

THE THRILLING TALE
OF A GIRL WHO LOVED--
THE WRONG MAN!



IT STARTED AS A GRAND ADVENTURE, THIS TRIP INTO THE WEST OF YESTERYEAR TO CLAIM THE MYSTERY-SHROUDED CIRCLE-H RANCH THAT HAD FALLEN TO ME AS THE LAST INHERITOR! BUT THE FILM OF GLAMOR HAD WORN THIN AS I CROSSED THE FINAL MOUNTAINOUS PEAK AND DESCENDED THROUGH A DRIVING RAIN TO THE VALLEY BELOW...

DAYLIGHT HAD GIVEN WAY TO A PREMATURE DUSK WHEN I ROLLED ONTO THE AGE-OLD CORDUROY BRIDGE! BELOW ME THE STREAM HAD TURNED INTO A CASCADE OF VIOLENCE, SPILLING ITS WEIGHT AGAINST THE SUPPORTS! THEN, JUST AS I REACHED THE CENTER, I HEARD AN OMINOUS CRACKING...

THE BRIDGE... IT'S GIVING WAY! NO!...



WORDS WERE A FUTILE THREAT AGAINST THAT RAGING TORRENT, THROUGH MY SCREAMS I HEARD A SPLINTERING CRASH, AND FELT MYSELF HURLING INTO A VOID...



I WAS CONSCIOUS OF ONLY ONE DESIRE... TO SAVE MYSELF! I PAWED THE WATER, FIGHTING NATURE'S FURY, GROWING WEAKER BY THE MOMENT! THEN THERE WAS A WHIRR OF MOTION... A COARSE HEMPEN LINE BIT INTO MY FLESH!

GRAB HOLD OF THE LINE! HURRY... NO TIME TO THROW ANOTHER LOOP... RAPIDS AHEAD!

A ROPE! OH, THANK HEAVENS!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



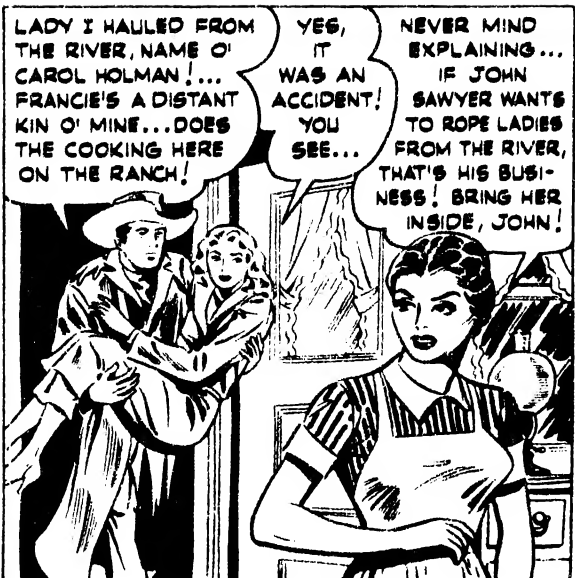
HIS HANDS WERE WORK-CALLOUSED, POWERFUL... BUT THEY SEARCHED MY ANKLE WITH KNOWING GENTLENESS, DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF THE INJURY! WHEN HE SEEMED SATISFIED THAT NOTHING WAS BROKEN...



THE WIND ROSE TO A GALE, LASHED AT US SPITEFULLY AS WE LOWERED OUR HEADS INTO THE TEETH OF IT! MY ANKLE THROBBED WITH PAIN, AND I BIT MY LIP TO KEEP MYSELF FROM CRYING OUT...



AS IF IT HAD GIVEN UP ITS PURSUIT BECAUSE OF THE DETERMINATION OF THIS MAN, THE WIND AND RAIN DIMINISHED TO A WHISPER AS WE RODE INTO THE YARD! I SAW THE SEASON-SCARRED RANCH HOUSE, THE WARM, FRIENDLY LIGHT IN THE WINDOWS...



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

THE DAYS PASSED SLOWLY AS MY ANKLE HEALED, AND THOUGH JOHN HAD WORK TO DO, HIS CONCERN OVER MY INJURY BROUGHT HIM TO MY SIDE FREQUENTLY... AND NOT WITHOUT A SHOW OF HOSTILITY FROM FRANCIE!

'MORNING, CAROL! THOUGHT I'D RIDE BY AND SEE HOW YORE ANKLE IS DOIN'! FEELIN' BETTER?

I'M ALMOST AS GOOD AS NEW AGAIN, JOHN! THOUGH IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE!

JOHN!



IS THIS HOW YOU RIDE A FENCE LINE? KEEP TO VISITING THE LADIES AND HALF YOUR STOCK WILL BE IN THE NEXT COUNTY... OR ON CIRCLE-H RANGE!

THE FENCES ARE STRUNG AND CLOSED, FRANCIE! BEST YOU LEAVE THE RANCH TO ME... I KNOW MY MIND!



THEN MAYBE YOU KNOW THE NEWS FROM TOWN, TOO! CIRCLE-H IS STARTING UP AGAIN! THERE'S KINFOLK OF OLD MIKE DEVLIN A'COMIN' AND YOU KNOW WHAT FOR! THERE'S FEUDIN' TO BE DONE AND YOU'LL BE HERE TALKIN' TO HER INSTEAD OF SHOOTIN'!

I HEARD THE NEWS... I'LL BE READY, NEVER YOU MIND!



CIRCLE-H... A FEUD? NO, THAT'S... IMPOSSIBLE!

IS IT? THE FLYING-M HAS BEEN FEUDIN' THE CIRCLE-H FOR THREE GENERATIONS... AND IT'LL KEEP ON UNTIL THERE'S NOBODY ALIVE TO CLAIM THAT OUTFIT! ANYWAY IT'S NONE OF YOUR AFFAIR, SO KEEP OUT OF IT!



PLEASE, JOHN... DON'T HAVE ANY PART OF IT! A FEUD... WHY THAT MEANS AIMLESS KILLING, MISERY...

I'M SORRY, CAROL, BUT MY KINFOLK VOWED TUH KILL EVERYONE OF OLD MIKE DEVLIN'S KIN! MEN KEPT THET VOW WITH THEIR LIVES... I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN NOW! BUT WHY YUH LOOKIN' AT ME THET WAY?



BECAUSE... I'M WORRIED FOR YOU, JOHN! YOU'RE TOO NICE A GUY TO HOLD AN ANCIENT HATRED!

IT'S HARD TO HATE ANYTHING... WHEN... YORE SO CLOSE TO ME, CAROL!



THE STRENGTH, THE TENDERNESS OF HIS ARMS, WERE ALL THAT I HAD IMAGINED! I FELT THE LATENT POWER OF THIS TACITURN MAN AS HE LIFTED ME UNTIL OUR LIPS ALMOST MET...

LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

ALTHOUGH IT WAS UNSPOKEN, OUR GROWING LOVE WAS EXPRESSED IN A HUNDRED WAYS! EVERY GLANCE, EVERY GESTURE, WAS A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION... YET BENEATH IT WAS THE NAMELESS FEAR I KNEW... FEUD! ONE AFTERNOON...

THINK YORE ANKLE'S WELL ENOUGH TO HOLD YOU IN A SADDLE? IT'S A NICE DAY FOR A RIDE!

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF IT WERE... AND I DO WANT TO SEE THE RANCH! LET'S TRY IT!



BUT IT'S SO WONDERFUL AND PEACEFUL, JOHN! HOW COULD ANYONE WANT TROUBLE IN THIS COUNTRY?

RECKON THET'S EASY TO SEE! RIDE DOWN THE VALLEY A WAYS... I'LL SHOW YUH WHAT MAKES TROUBLE...AND FEUDS!



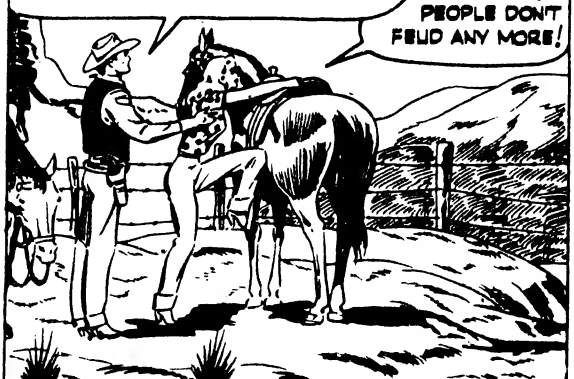
THERE IT IS CAROL...WATER! JEST A POOL O' MUDDY WATER, BUT IT MEANS LIFE! THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH FOR ONE OUTFIT...YET TWO RANCHES CLAIMED IT, AND THE SHOOTIN' STARTED! FROM THEN ON IT WAS THE FLYING-M AGAINST THE CIRCLE-H!

KILLING... OVER THAT? WHY, IT'S RIDICULOUS!



MESSE SO, BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS! OLD MIKE DEVLIN FENCED IT OFF AND MY GRAN'PAPPY BROKE THE FENCES! THEY SHOT IT OUT AND BOTH DIED! BEEN HAPPENIN' EVER SINCE...WHOEVER BUT TAKES OVER THE CIRCLE-H TRIES TO TAKE OVER THE WATER AND RUN US OUT...WE CAN'T LET THET HAPPEN!

THIS IS A NEW DAY AND AGE! PEOPLE DON'T FEUD ANY MORE!



THINK NOT? WELL, FRANCIS AND ME ARE THE LAST OF OUR FAMILY...THET'S HOW RECENT THIS FEUD IS! SAY, LET'S GIT BACK 'FORE FRANCIE LATHERS UP! SHE'S ACTING STRANGE OF LATE!

I...KNOW... AND I THINK I KNOW WHY!



WE RODE BACK THROUGH THE SUNSET, SILENT... BOTH ALONE WITH DISTURBING THOUGHTS! FRANCIS WAS WAITING FOR US...

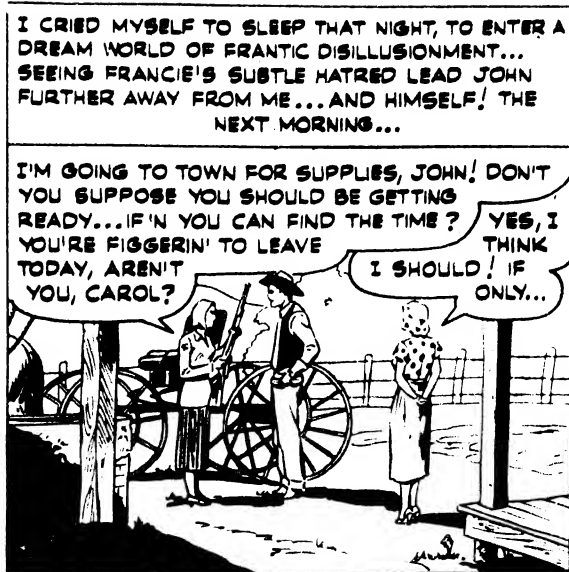
WELL, I SEE YOUR FOOT IS GOOD ENOUGH TO RIDE ON! I SPECT YOU'LL BE LEAVING US SOON!

FRANCIS! STOP THET UNCIVIL TALK! CAROL IS OUR GUEST FOR AS LONG AS SHE WANTS TO STAY!

THANKS, JOHN...BUT MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I PLAN TO LEAVE!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

FRANCIE LEAPED FROM THE BUCKBOARD, HER FACE FLUSHED WITH EXCITEMENT! EVEN BEFORE SHE SPOKE I HAD A DREADFUL ANTICIPATION OF HER WORDS!

THE NEWS IS GOIN' 'ROUND TOWN LIKE A PRAIRIE FIRE! LAWYER HODGES HAD A LETTER FROM THE NEW OWNER OF THE CIRCLE-H! HE SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE ALREADY, BUT PROBABLY STOPPED AT THE RANCH FIRST! YOU'VE GOT TO GET THE JUMP ON HIM...NOW!

WHAT'S THAT?



I'LL GET MUH GUN!

JOHN... YOU CAN'T... YOU PROMISED ME!



HE HAS TO! YOU THINK WE WANT TO GET BURNED OUT...MAYBE SHOT UP? OH, NO, NOT WHEN THERE'S STILL ONE OF US LEFT TO CARRY ON! IT'S US OR THEM, AND YOU KEEP OUT OF IT!

SHE'S RIGHT, CAROL!



I CAUGHT THE CONNOTATION IN FRANCIE'S WORDS THEN! WHY, SHE WAS ACTUALLY *HOPING* JOHN WOULD BE KILLED IN THE FEUD... SO THE FLYING-M WOULD BE HERE!

NO...YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR ME!

I KNOW, BUT THIS IS SOMETHING YOU CAN'T ASK OF ME, CAROL! IT'S A JOB A MAN MUST DO!



THEN BE A BLIND FOOL! LET HER TALK YOU INTO IT! I...I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS!

CAROL... WAIT!

LET HER GO, JOHN! SHE ISN'T OUR KIND!



I JUMPED INTO THE BUCKBOARD BEFORE HE COULD STOP ME...DROVE TOWARD TOWN! THERE WAS NO PURSUIT, AND MY EYES WERE BLINDED WITH TEARS! AS I REACHED THE MAIN STREET OF CONDOR CITY...

HEARD IT'S AN EASTERNER TAKIN' OVER CIRCLE-H! JOHN SAWYER'LL END THAT!

I DUNNO...KILLIN' MEANS THE LAW'LL ACT AND JOHN'LL BE ON THE DODGE! HATE TO SEE THE FEUD FLARE UP AGAIN!

IT'S TOO LATE, MUCH TOO LATE TO STOP IT NOW, BUT HOW CAN IT END?

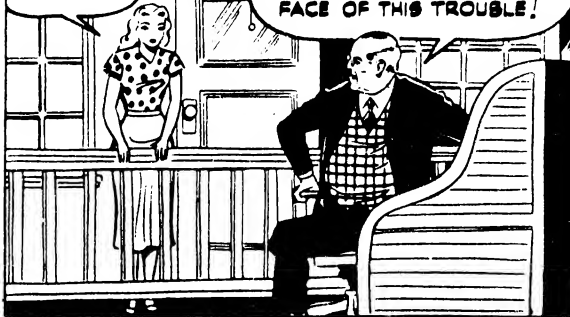


LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

YES, THE MERE MENTION OF THE RIVAL RANCHES BROUGHT A SUDDEN, STILL HUSH! BUT WHO COULD POSSIBLY FORESEE THE ASSOCIATION OF LOVE WITH A BLOOD-FEUD? I FOUND THE OFFICE OF LAWYER HODGES AND WALKED IN...

MR. HODGES? I'M CAROL HOLMAN, THE NEW OWNER OF THE CIRCLE-H!

YOU... A WOMAN? BUT I THOUGHT... OH, THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE! I CAN'T LET YOU TAKE POSSESSION IN THE FACE OF THIS TROUBLE!



BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN, AM I TO BE AFRAID? MR. HODGES... IT SEEMS I COME FROM PRETTY RUGGED STOCK!

ALL RIGHT, MISS HOLMAN... THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO EXCEPT WARN YOU! HERE ARE THE PAPERS, AND I WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK!



MR. HODGES... HE'S COMIN'! JOHN SAWYER... HEADIN' FOR THE CIRCLE-H! THERE'S GONNA BE A SHOOTIN' TONIGHT FOR SHORE!

SEE WHAT I MEAN, MISS HOLMAN? I CAN'T LET YOU... WAIT!



I SAW HIM GO BY THEN, THE RIFLE IN THE CROOK OF HIS ARM! HE SAT TALL IN THE SADDLE, HIS FACE SET AND DEMANDING, AND HE LOOKED NEITHER TO THE RIGHT NOR THE LEFT! OUTSIDE, NO ONE SPOKE, AND A PALL HUNG OVER THE TOWN...



THEIR EYES WERE QUESTIONING... WAITING FOR MY ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM! YES... I HAD ONE!

MR. HODGES... I'D LIKE TO BORROW YOUR FASTEST HORSE!



THEY GAVE ME A BRUTE OF A STALLION... A HORSE CAPABLE OF MAKING THE RIDE AHEAD... AND THEY POINTED OUT THE SHORTEST TRAIL! BUT, EVEN THEN, NIGHT ENVELOPED THE HILLS BEFORE I CAME TO THE FIRST LINE OF THE CIRCLE-H!

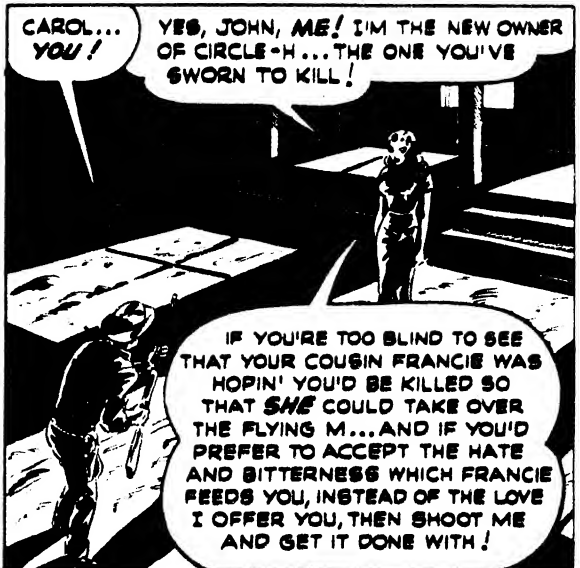


LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

THE HOUSE WAS A RAMSHACKLE AFFAIR, HAVING LONG SINCE GIVEN UP ITS BATTLE AGAINST THE ELEMENTS! BUT IN THE LITTLE TIME I HAD LEFT, I LIT ALL THE LAMPS...READYING MYSELF FOR THE UNCERTAIN END TO ALL THIS! THEN...I HEARD THE STEADY DRUMMING OF HOOF IN THE YARD!...



I'M HERE, CIRCLE-H...YUH CAN'T GET AWAY! FROM ME, SO COME OUT SHOOTIN', YUH HEAR? COME OUT BEFORE I GO IN AND GET YUH... WHOEVER YUH ARE!



HIS RIFLE FELL UNNOTICED TO THE GROUND AS HE RAN TO ENVELOP ME IN HIS ARMS!

OH, CAROL... I DIDN'T KNOW! FORGIVE ME... DARLING, FORGIVE ME! I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD! WHAT DOES A MAN HAVE TO GO THROUGH BEFORE HE COMES TO HIS SENSES? CAROL, PLEASE...



HIS ARMS, HIS LIPS, GAVE ME HIS ANSWER, EVEN BEFORE HE SPOKE...

NO...IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING FOR US! FROM NOW ON WE BOTH WEAR THE SAME BRAND!



The End

I SAID **NO**, TOO OFTEN!



PROUD...OH, PROUD IS THE HEART... PROUD OF ITS EMOTIONS. ITS LOVE... ITS LOYALTY! BUT...WHERE IS THE PRIDE IN A BROKEN HEART? THAT'S WHAT I, DALE AVERY, ASKED MYSELF AS, IN TEARS, I RUSHED TO THE HOME OF MY AUNT MARIETTA!

WHY, DALE! WHAT IS IT, DARLING? WHAT ON EARTH IS WRONG?

OH, AUNT MARIETTA! (SOB!) I...I...OH...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!



MY WEeping CHOKED ME... I COULD SPEAK NO MORE! SOBBING BREATH-LESSLY, I FOUND MYSELF ON MY KNEES BEFORE HER, MY HEAD ON HER LAP! AUNT MARIETTA CALM, PATIENT, STROKED MY HEAD...AND I FOUND PEACE OF A SORT!

ALL RIGHT, DALE! GO AHEAD AND CRY IF YOU MUST! THAT'S ONE BLESSING, AT LEAST, WE WOMEN HAVE...THE ABILITY TO CRY! NOW, WHEN YOU FEEL BETTER, YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

AT LAST THE TEARS STOPPED! I WAS ABLE TO LOOK INTO THE FACE OF MY AUNT AND WHAT DID I SEE? MARIETTA CUMMINGS, MY MOTHER'S SISTER, A PERSON WHO WAS MORE THAN JUST A RELATIVE TO ME! SHE WAS MY FRIEND, ONE TO WHOM I COULD COME WITH THE MOST PERPLEXING PROBLEMS OF A YOUNG GIRL, AND FIND UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC ADVICE! I ALWAYS WENT TO HER WITH MY TROUBLES...



AUNT MARIETTA... NOW, NOW, DEAR! YOU'RE STILL SO LOVELY... SO ATTRACTIVE! WHY HAVEN'T YOU EVER MARRIED? NOT COME HERE TO TALK ABOUT THE FADING BEAUTY OF YOUR SPINSTER AUNT! SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO UPSET YOU! WHAT IS IT?



IT'S...IT'S NICK! I HATE HIM! I HATE HIM! AH, NICK, EH? I THOUGHT SO! BUT ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO HE WAS THE SHINING LIGHT OF YOUR LIFE! TELL ME WHAT AWFUL THING HE HAS DONE TO CHANGE HIM INTO THIS AWFUL, FEARSOME MONSTER!



I WISH YOU WOULDN'T JOKE ABOUT IT, AUNT MARIETTA! THIS IS SERIOUS...VERY MUCH SO! HE BROKE A DATE WITH ME! NOW HE WANTS ME TO FORGIVE HIM AND GO OUT WITH HIM AGAIN! I CAN'T DO IT, AUNT MARIETTA... I CAN'T KOWTOW TO HIM AND SACRIFICE MY PRIDE... I'D SHAME MYSELF!



YOUR PRIDE, EH? PRIDE, GOETH BEFORE A FALL, DALE--AND YOU HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HIM!

OH, YES...DARN IT! I LOVE THE GUY MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THIS WORLD...THAT'S WHAT HURTS SO MUCH...THAT'S WHY I'M SO MISERABLE! BUT I'VE GOT TO THINK OF MY PRIDE!



SHE HAD A LOOK IN HER FACE THAT I HAD NEVER SEEN IN ALL THE YEARS I KNEW HER! SUDDENLY, SHE SEEMED AS IF SHE WERE FAR AWAY FROM ME...IN A LONG-AGO WORLD! AND HER VOICE WAS SOFT AND TENDER... SHE SEEMED TO BE SPEAKING TO HERSELF...

PRIDE...PRIDE! FOOLISH, STUBBORN PRIDE! SO MY NIECE IS CURSED WITH IT, TOO! BUT WHERE LOVE IS CONCERNED, THERE CAN BE NO PRIDE! HOW CAN I...DALE!



YES, AUNT MARIETTA!

HER FINGERS SANK INTO MY SHOULDERS, HURTING THEM! THERE WAS A FERVOR ABOUT HER NOW, PASSION BEHIND THOSE EYES, FIRE IN HER SPEECH! THIS WAS NOT THE AUNT MARIETTA I KNEW! THIS WAS SOMEONE ELSE...GLOWING WITH AN INNER FIRE... BURNING WITH THE SUPPRESSION OF A LONG-DEAD EMOTION!

DALE, I'M GOING TO TRY TO PROVE TO YOU HOW WRONG YOU ARE! I'M GOING TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF ANOTHER GIRL, WHO, WHEN SHE WAS AS YOUNG AS YOU ARE NOW, MADE THE SAME MISTAKE YOU ARE ABOUT TO MAKE! IT ALL HAPPENED A LITTLE OVER TWENTY YEARS AGO...BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, DARLING!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

"YES, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, DALE, BECAUSE IN THOSE DAYS I WAS JUST AS YOU ARE... YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE AND POSSESSED OF A FIERCE, STUBBORN PRIDE! I, TOO, WAS IN LOVE! IN LOVE WITH ALL MY BEING, FOR THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME IN MY LIFE! AH, HOW SURE I WAS OF MYSELF, HOW HIGH I HELD MY HEAD, CONFIDENT IN MY JUDGMENT...AND IN MY PRIDE!



"THE BOY I LOVED? WE CALLED HIM 'JIM' THEN! HE WAS THE CATCH OF OUR TOWN-- THERE WASN'T A GIRL WHO WASN'T ENVIOUS OF ME FOR HAVING HIM! TALL, HANDSOME, ENGAGING, HE LOVED ME, TOO!

HELLO, ANGEL! GOSH! YOU'RE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER--I CAN NEVER GET OVER YOU!

JIM... PLEASE! PEOPLE ARE LISTENING... AND LOOKING!



"HIS LOVE WAS STRONG AND IT COULD NOT BE DENIED! IT THRILLED ME TO THE CORE TO KNOW THAT HE WAS MINE...ALL MINE...FOREVER!

WHO CARES! LET THEM LISTEN... LET THEM LOOK! LET THEM KNOW I LOVE YOU...AND THAT YOU LOVE ME! SAY IT! GO ON, SAY YOU LOVE ME!

YOU WONDERFUL FOOL, OF COURSE I'LL SAY IT! I LOVE YOU!



"COULD ANYONE ASK FOR A BETTER LOVE, A MORE WORTH-WHILE AFFECTION THAN THIS? WE WERE AS UNAFRAID AS TWO YOUNG COLTS DARTING ONTO A PASTURE FOR THE FIRST TIME! THIS WAS MY LOVE... THIS WAS MY LIFE... THIS WAS HEAVEN!



"ALL OUR PLANS WERE FOR OUR FUTURE TOGETHER! IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION TO IMAGINE IT COULD BE ANY OTHER WAY... THAT THE THINGS WE DREAMED WERE NOT TO BE!

THERE'S WHERE WE'LL BUILD OUR HOUSE, MARIETTA... WHERE WE'LL RAISE OUR FAMILY... WHERE WE'LL LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

AND WE'RE STILL SO YOUNG, JIM! WE'VE GOT A WHOLE LIFETIME AHEAD OF US, DARLING!



DON'T...DON'T SAY ANY MORE! JUST STAND THERE AND LET ME LOOK AT YOU! THAT'S HOW I ALWAYS WANT TO THINK OF YOU, MARIETTA...AS YOU ARE NOW...YOUR EYES, YOUR FACE... AGLOW WITH LOVE AND TRUST! LIFE WON'T BE EASY, DARLING... THERE'LL BE TROUBLE, HARDSHIPS! OUR LOVE WILL BE TESTED...ALL TRUE LOVE MUST BE! BUT THIS...THIS MOMENT I WANT TO RETAIN IN MY HEART FOREVER!



BUT I CAN'T JUST LOOK AT YOU ANY MORE! I'VE GOT TO HOLD YOU... KISS YOU! MARIETTA! OH, MY DARLING!



LOVE AND LIFE WERE EXCITING, THRILLING BEYOND WORDS, THAT DAY ON A WIND-SWEPT HILLTOP! NEVER BEFORE...OR SINCE, HAVE I KNOWN SUCH UTTER HAPPINESS! OH, WHY DID ALL THIS HAVE TO END? WHY? WHY?

LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

SHE PAUSED! HER EYES STILL HAD THAT FAR-AWAY LOOK, RE-LIVING AGAIN THE THRILL OF THAT LOVE, THE ECSTASY OF THAT KISS! I HESITATED TO BREAK INTO HER WORLD OF ILLUSION AND MEMORY, BUT AT LAST I SPOKE...

I... I NEVER KNEW... I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE EVER IN LOVE! I ALWAYS IMAGINED YOU AS... AS...

...AS JUST AN OLD MAID, BORN TO DIE ALONE AND UNLOVED? THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY, ISN'T IT, DEAR? BUT I WASN'T ALWAYS THAT WAY! I KNEW ROMANCE! I KNEW THE EXCITEMENT OF A MAN'S LOVE!



MY LIPS ARE DRY NOW SHRIVELED UP, UNTOUCHED BY THE KISS OF LOVE IN ALL THESE YEARS! BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT! TODAY HE WOULD HAVE BEEN STILL AT MY SIDE... IF I HADN'T LET MY PRIDE RUIN EVERYTHING... MY LIFE... MY LOVE... MY FUTURE... EVERYTHING!

BUT HOW COULD PRIDE RUIN A LOVE LIKE THAT, AUNT MARIETTA?



YOU ASK THAT? YOU WHO ARE ACTING EXACTLY AS I ACTED!...PRIDE... FALSE PRIDE...WHICH IS NOTHING MORE THAN FOOLISH SELFISHNESS, CAN RUIN ANY LOVE... CAN DESTROY ALL THAT IS NOBLE AND FINE IN A WOMAN'S HEART! YOU SEE, DALE, I HAD A DATE WITH JIM... A DATE HE DIDN'T KEEP!



"I WAITED AT OUR FAVORITE MEETING PLACE, A BENCH UNDER AN ELM IN THE PARK! THE TIME FOR OUR DATE CAME... AND WENT! AND WITH IT WENT MY PATIENCE!"

HOW DARE HE DO THIS TO ME! HOW DARE HE KEEP ME WAITING!



"HE HAD NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE! I WASN'T USED TO BEING TREATED THIS WAY! I WAITED UNTIL I REALIZED HE WASN'T GOING TO SHOW UP AT ALL! THEN I BEGAN TO BE A LITTLE FRIGHTENED!"

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO JIM! HE'S BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT! HE'S HURT! JIM! OH, JIM! WHERE ARE YOU?



"I LEFT, MY MIND SHAKEN BY TWO EMOTIONS! FEAR FOR HIS SAFETY... AND SUSPICION! YES, I'LL ADMIT IT... SUSPICION! BUT I DIDN'T ADMIT IT TO MYSELF AT THE TIME! I MADE MYSELF BELIEVE I STILL TRUSTED HIM... THAT I THOUGHT SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO JIM TO KEEP HIM FROM OUR DATE!"

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO... WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIM! I'M ASHAMED TO CALL HOME... BUT I'VE GOT TO... HE MAY NEED ME! HE MAY BE CALLING FOR ME!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

"AS YOU KNOW, DALE, MY PARENTS, MINE AND YOUR MOTHER'S, DIED WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG! I LIVED WITH MY GRANDPARENTS, YOUR MOTHER WITH YOUR UNCLE HERBERT A MARRIED BROTHER! WELL, WHEN I GOT HOME, I CALLED JIM'S HOUSE...

OH, HELLO, MARIETTA!... NO, DEAR, JIM ISN'T HERE! HE DROVE AWAY WITH A GIRL HE WAS TALKING TO OUT IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE! I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE...

THANK YOU! IT'S ALL RIGHT! I WAS JUST...GOOD-BYE!

"I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY SENSES! JIM HAD GONE OUT WITH ANOTHER GIRL! I HAD BEEN STOOD UP FOR SOMEONE ELSE! THIS WAS BEYOND MY COMPREHENSION! YES, MY PRIDE HAD TAKEN A SEVERE JOLT... AND IT HURT ME BEYOND REPAIR!

HE SAID HE LOVES ME!.. AND YET HE FORGETS ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE! IS THIS ALL HIS LOVE MEANS TO HIM? ALL I MEAN TO HIM?

"I SAT ALONE ALL DAY... THINKING, BROODING, GROWING ANGRIER BY THE MOMENT! THEN... AT NIGHT... JIM CALLED...

MARIETTA?... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS... BUT I'VE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE!

NO, JIM, IT IS I WHO MADE THE MISTAKE... IN THINKING I LOVED YOU! WE'RE THROUGH! GO BACK TO THE GIRL YOU WERE OUT WITH TODAY... WHEN YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE WITH ME!

YOU'RE CALLING ONLY BECAUSE YOU FOUND OUT YOUR MOTHER TOLD ME WHERE YOU WERE! OTHERWISE YOU WOULD HAVE MADE UP SOME STORY OR OTHER! YOU WERE WITH ANOTHER GIRL, JIM... AND ALL THE WHILE I WAS WORRIED SICK, THINKING SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO YOU!

DARLING... IF YOU'LL ONLY LET ME EXPLAIN! DON'T YOU TRUST ME?

TRUST YOU? I'VE GOT MY PRIDE TO THINK ABOUT! I'M NOT GOING TO BE KICKED AROUND BY ANY MAN! I'D... I'D RATHER NOT SEE YOU AGAIN, JIM!

I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR LOVE WOULD DIE SO EASILY, MARIETTA! BUT MINE ISN'T DEAD! YES, I WAS FOOLISH, STUPIDLY, CHILDISHLY FOOLISH! I'LL ADMIT IT! I DID STAND YOU UP! I DID GO OUT WITH ANOTHER GIRL! IT WAS A MISTAKE! BUT I BEG YOU TO FORGIVE ME... GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE! ISN'T YOUR LOVE FOR ME WORTH THAT?

GOOD-BYE, JIM!

GOOD-BYE, DARLING!

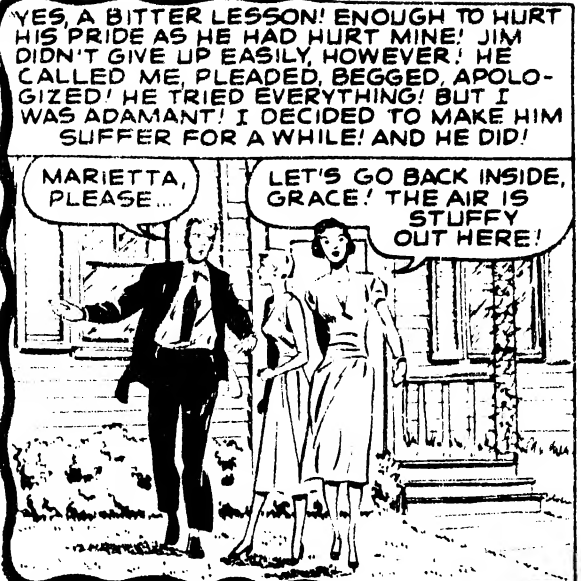
"PRIDE! PRIDE! STUBBORN PRIDE! I WANTED TO HOLD HIM... TO TELL HIM I UNDERSTOOD... THAT IT WAS ONLY A YOUTHFUL ESCAPE... A LAST FLING... BUT MY PRIDE WOULDN'T LET ME! MY PRIDE SENT HIM AWAY!"

LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



YOU MEAN... YOU UNDERSTOOD? YOU DIDN'T MIND HIS GOING OUT WITH THIS OTHER GIRL... AND YET YOU SENT HIM AWAY? WHY, AUNT MARIETTA?

MY PRIDE, DALE, THE SAME PRIDE YOU HAVE! I KNEW OUR LOVE WAS TOO REAL TO BE BROKEN UP BY A CASUAL, IMPETUOUS DATE! AND YET... I WANTED TO TEACH HIM A LESSON!



YES, A BITTER LESSON! ENOUGH TO HURT HIS PRIDE AS HE HAD HURT MINE! JIM DIDN'T GIVE UP EASILY, HOWEVER! HE CALLED ME, PLEADED, BEGGED, APOLOGIZED! HE TRIED EVERYTHING! BUT I WAS ADAMANT! I DECIDED TO MAKE HIM SUFFER FOR A WHILE! AND HE DID!

MARIETTA, PLEASE...

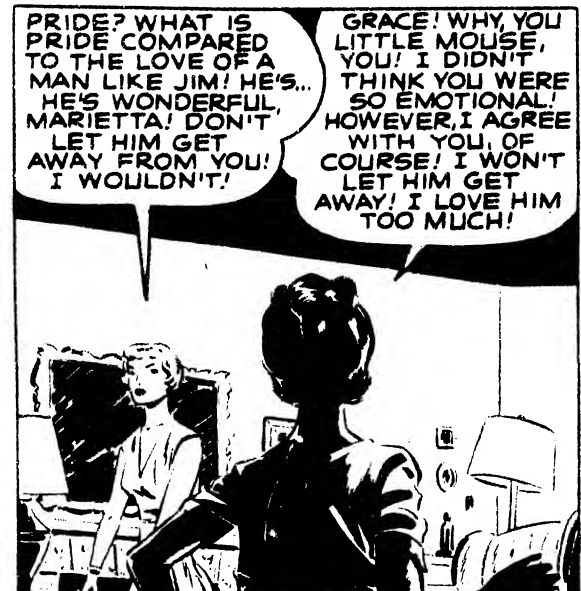
LET'S GO BACK INSIDE, GRACE! THE AIR IS STUFFY OUT HERE!



'GRACE, OF COURSE, WAS YOUR MOTHER, DALE! SHE WAS A FRAGILE, LOVELY YOUNG THING, AS SWEET THEN AS SHE IS TODAY! SHE HAD COME OVER TO ME!

MARIETTA, AREN'T YOU MAKING A MISTAKE TREATING JIM THIS WAY? AFTER ALL, A MAN WILL TAKE JUST SO MUCH... AND THEN...

DON'T WORRY, GRACE! WHEN JIM HAS SUFFERED ENOUGH, I'LL TAKE HIM BACK! MEANWHILE, I'LL TEACH HIM TO HURT MY PRIDE!



PRIDE? WHAT IS PRIDE COMPARED TO THE LOVE OF A MAN LIKE JIM! HE'S... HE'S WONDERFUL, MARIETTA! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY FROM YOU! I WOULDN'T!

GRACE! WHY, YOU LITTLE MOUSE, YOU! I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE SO EMOTIONAL! HOWEVER, I AGREE WITH YOU, OF COURSE! I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! I LOVE HIM TOO MUCH!



'IN SPITE OF MY PROMISE TO YOUR MOTHER, I DIDN'T FORGIVE JIM... NOT JUST YET! AND HE CALLED ME ON THE PHONE EVERY DAY... OR SENT ME FLOWERS WITH NOTES!

WELL! NOW HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, JIM? ALL RIGHT, DARLING, THIS FARCE HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH! THE NEXT TIME YOU CALL, I'LL SAY "YES!"

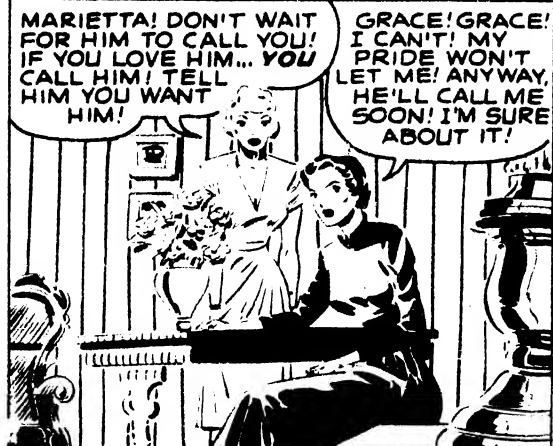


'BUT... HE DIDN'T CALL! NOT THE NEXT DAY OR THE NEXT! I WAITED FOR HIM... WAITED TO TELL HIM I UNDERSTOOD... THAT I FORGAVE HIM! BUT I WAITED IN VAIN, AND THE HOURS PASSED IN SLOW, LEADEN MINUTES...

WHY DOESN'T HE CALL? HE ALWAYS DID! JIM! JIM! I WANT TO HEAR YOUR VOICE! I WANT TO DREAM AND PLAN AGAIN... TO TAKE UP OUR LIFE WHERE WE LEFT OFF! OH, RING, PHONE! RING! RING!

LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

THE PHONE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A DEAD, INANIMATE OBJECT! I STARED AT IT IN THOSE AWFUL DAYS OF LONELINESS! THAT'S HOW YOUR MOTHER FOUND ME ONE DAY...



"I LOST ALL INTEREST IN LIFE! THE DAYS GREW INTO WEEKS... THE WEEKS INTO MONTHS! LONELY BITTER, UNHAPPY MONTHS FOR ME! I COULD HAVE PHONED HIM! HE WAS THERE AT THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE! BUT I DIDN'T! MY PRIDE WOULDN'T LET ME!"



MANY, MANY TIMES I REACHED OUT FOR THE PHONE... AND MANY TIMES I STOPPED! MY FIERCE STUBBORNNESS WOULDN'T SURRENDER TO MY HEART! I NEVER CALLED HIM AND HE NEVER CALLED ME!

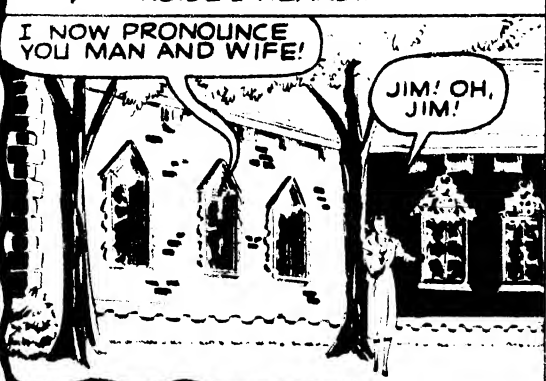
OH, AUNT MARIETTA! HOW PITIFUL!



PITY? I DON'T WANT PITY, DEAR! I DESERVED WHAT I GOT! I HAD IT COMING TO ME! AS A PUNISHMENT FOR MY PROUD HEART! NO, SAVE THE PITY FOR YOURSELF... FOR WHAT YOU ARE DOING!



"YES, I SHALL ALWAYS LOVE HIM... EVEN THOUGH, A FEW MONTHS LATER, I LOST HIM FOREVER, WHEN HE MARRIED SOMEONE ELSE! I WAS INVITED TO THE WEDDING... BUT I DIDN'T GO! I COULDN'T FACE HIM AGAIN! INSTEAD, I WAITED IN THE SHADOW OF THE TREES NEAR THE CHURCH... WHILE INSIDE I HEARD...



"THEY CAME OUT, HE SMILING, SHE RADIANT IN THE BEAUTY OF A NEW AND HAPPY BRIDE! ON THE OUTSKIRTS, UNSEEN BY THEM, I WATCHED...

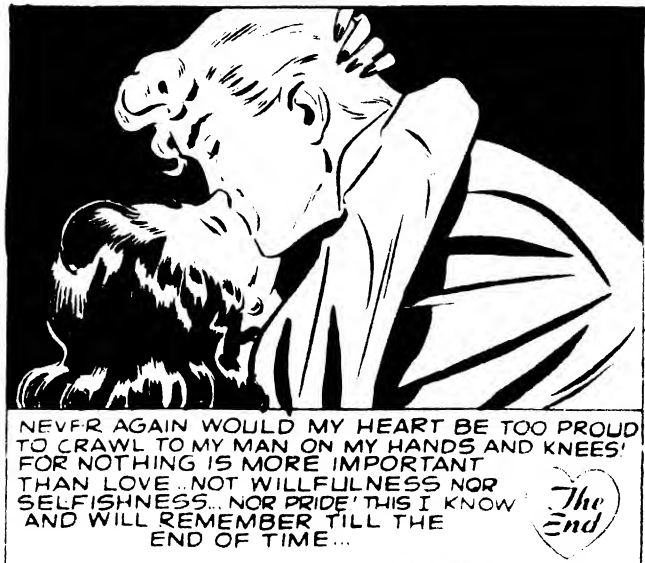
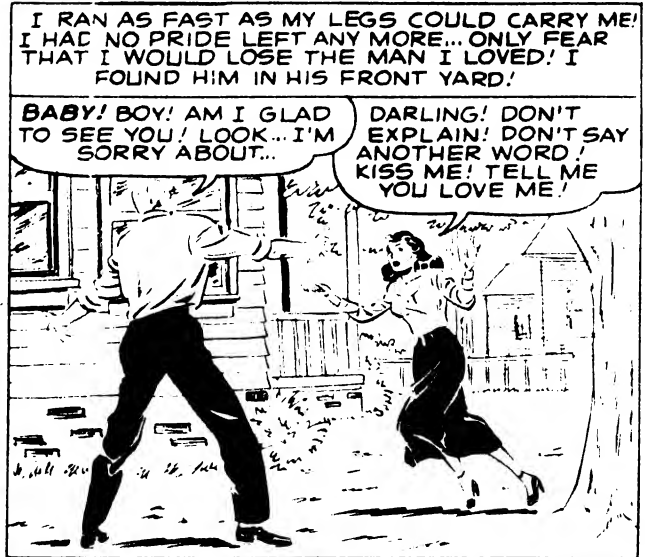
THAT COULD HAVE BEEN ME! I COULD HAVE BEEN THAT BRIDE BY HIS SIDE! BUT THAT'S ALL OVER NOW! ALL OVER!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



The End

THE COWBOY I COULDN'T COMMAND!

6958



THE STORY OF
A COWBOY WHO
NEVER LEARNED
TO TAKE
ORDERS!

WHEN DAD TRAVELED EAST, AND LEFT ME TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIS RODEO TRAINING QUARTERS, I WAS DETERMINED TO JUSTIFY HIS FAITH IN ME! THE MEN WERE A WILD BUNCH, AND TIME AFTER TIME I WAS FORCED TO PROVE THAT EVEN THOUGH I WAS A GIRL, I WAS STILL THEIR BOSS!

MISS DUNHAM...YUH BETTER GET OUTSIDE! RIP'S GONE WILD AGAIN... HE'S SHOOTIN' UP EVERYTHING IN SIGHT!

WHAT?... WHY, THAT GUN-HAPPY FOOL... I'LL SHOW HIM!



LOOK HERE, RIP... YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUBLE! PUT THAT GUN AWAY!

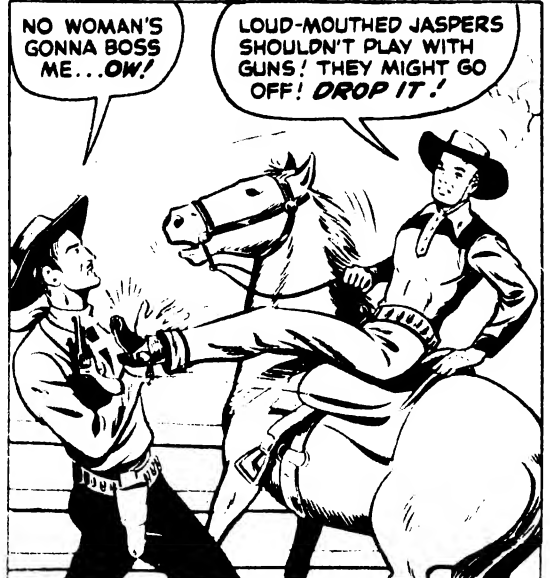
SAYS WHO?... I'M NOT TAKIN' ORDERS FROM ANY WOMAN!

BANG!

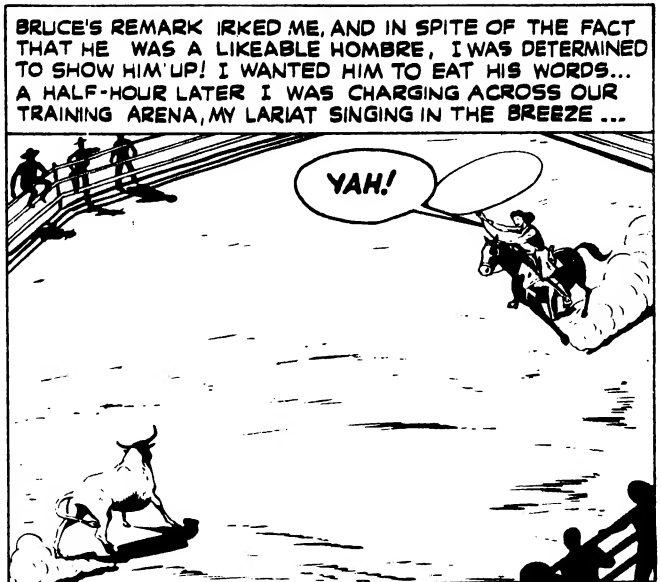
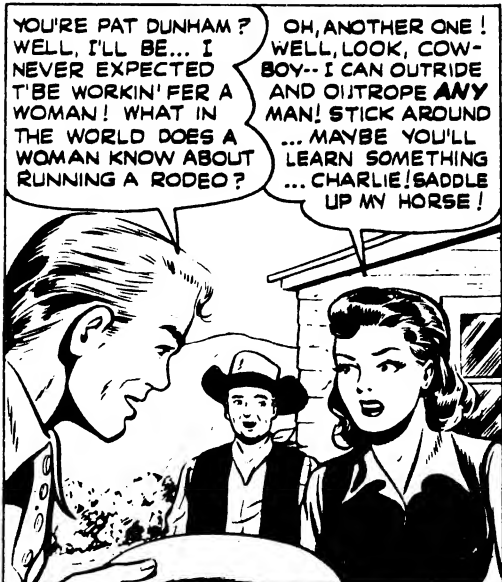
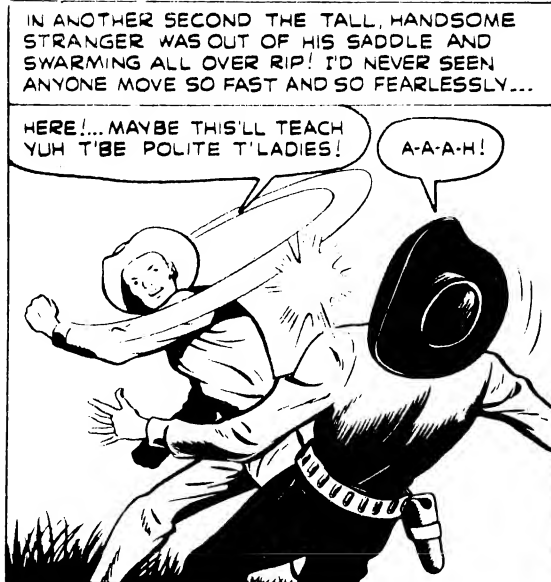


NO WOMAN'S GONNA BOSS ME...OW!

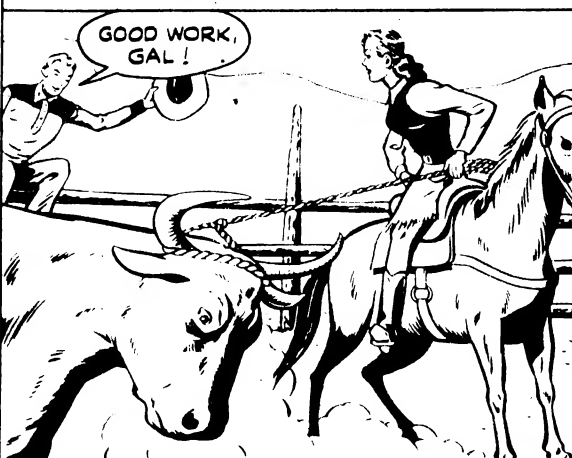
LOUD-MOUTHED JASPERS SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH GUNS! THEY MIGHT GO OFF! DROP IT!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



THE TRAINING DAD GAVE ME SERVED ME WELL, AND IN A FEW SECONDS MY LOOP ENCIRCLED THE BULL'S HORNS! TRIUMPHANTLY, I TURNED TOWARD BRUCE... THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WAS JUST WHAT I'D WANTED TO SEE!



BUT TURNING MY HEAD AWAY, AFTER LOOPING A BULL, WAS ONE THING FATHER NEVER TAUGHT ME TO DO! SUDDENLY THERE WAS A TERRIFIC PULL ON MY LARIAT, AND I WAS TORN LOOSE FROM MY SADDLE ...



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

MY BODY HIT THE EARTH WITH A BREATHTAKING THUD THAT LITERALLY SENT MY SENSES WHIRLING... MY EYES FOCUSED ON THE HUGE MASS OF MUSCLED FLESH THAT CAME TEARING DOWN UPON ME! I WAS ABOUT TO SCREAM OUT WHEN AN ARM CAUGHT ME ABOUT MY WAIST AND YANKED ME FROM THE GROUND.



AS THE MEN WENT AFTER THE BULL, BRUCE HELD ME IN THE SADDLE! THOUGH I HAD KNOWN HIM A SCANT FEW MINUTES, HE HAD ALREADY COME TO MY RESCUE TWICE! WITH HIS ARMS SNUGLY ABOUT ME, I FELT A STRANGE WARM SENSATION VIBRATE THROUGH MY BODY...



THEN SLOWLY A BROAD GRIN CUT ACROSS BRUCE'S FACE AND, AS HE SPOKE, HIS WORDS CUT DEEPLY INTO MY PRIDE... I FELT THE BLOOD TINGLING THROUGH MY VEINS...



AFTER THAT, BECAUSE OF MY FOOLISH PRIDE, I REFUSED TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH BRUCE! IN MY HEART I CHERISHED THE MEMORY OF THAT ONE EMBRACE, FOR, IN SPITE OF MY SUPERFICIALLY COLD ATTITUDE, DOWN DEEP I HAD THE FEELING THAT THIS ORNERY CUSS WAS THE MAN FOR ME! I WAS STANDING BY THE CORRAL ADMIRING THE MOONLIGHT, WHEN...



WHY NOT CALL A TRUCE... I'VE BEEN TRYIN' TO FORGET YOU, BUT I JUST CAN'T!



YOU DON'T REALLY WANT ME TO DO THAT... I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES... PAT, I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU... YOU'VE GOTTEN UNDER MY SKIN!

OH-H, BRUCE DARLING... I'M A FOOL TO ADMIT IT TO YOU, BUT I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU, TOO!



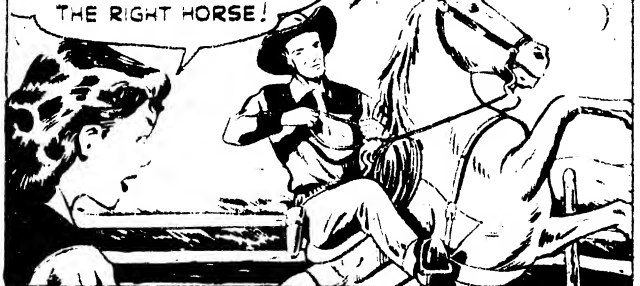
LOVE DRAMAS No. 1



FROM THEN ON, WE SPENT EVERY SPARE MOMENT TOGETHER! WORD SOON GOT AROUND ABOUT OUR ROMANCE, AND THE EFFECT IT HAD ON THE MEN WAS AMAZING! WITH BRUCE BACKING ME UP NO ONE DARED DISOBEY MY ORDERS...YET THE ONE SORE SPOT WAS **BRUCE'S** STUBBORN ATTITUDE! SOMEHOW HE STILL COULDN'T SEE ME AS HIS BOSS...AND IT INFLURIATED ME...I WANTED THINGS DONE **MY** WAY!

BRUCE...YOU'VE **GOT** TO CHANGE YOUR ACT...THE RODEO OPENS SOON AND I THINK YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE RIGHT HORSE!

LOOK, DARLING, THIS IS **MY** ACT...LET ME WORK IT OUT **MY** WAY!



I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, BRUCE...YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR FRIENDSHIP! I'M STILL RUNNING THIS SHOW FOR FATHER!

SURE, HONEY...BUT I'M NOT NEW IN THIS BUSINESS EITHER! WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS PLAY THE BOSS? ALWAYS TELLING SOMEBODY WHAT TO DO!



IT WAS THE SAME STORY OVER AND OVER AGAIN...FORTUNATELY OUR LOVE WAS BIGGER THAN OUR ARGUMENTS, AND, ACCORDINGLY...

C'MON, PAT...LET'S FORGET IT FOR NOW! I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT FIGHTING WITH YOU!

OH, BRUCE...CAN'T WE EVER AGREE ON ANYTHING?



DARLING, TELL ME YOU **WILL** TRY ANOTHER HORSE?

I DON'T KNOW, PAT...WE'LL SEE...



THOSE WERE OUR MOMENTS...BUT THE DIFFERENCES KEPT CROPPING UP! WE WRANGLLED CONSTANTLY...WHEN THE MEN WERE NEARBY I COULDN'T AFFORD TO GIVE IN, NO MATTER WHO WAS WRONG

BRUCE! THE BOYS TELL ME YOU REFUSED TO RIDE THE HORSE I PICKED OUT FOR YOU!

NOW LOOK, PAT...LET'S NOT START THAT AGAIN...I TRIED OUT THAT CRITTER OF YOURS AND HIS LEGS AREN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD HIMSELF UP! I'M STICKIN' T' MY OWN HORSE...SO LET'S FORGET IT ONCE AND FOR ALL!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

BRUCE'S COMPLETE DISREGARD OF MY ORDERS SENT A WAVE OF LAUGHTER ECHOING THROUGH THE MEN... AND, AS I STOOD THERE, THE HUMILIATION TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A VIOLENT OUTRAGE AND I GAVE VENT TO AN OUTBURST OF UNCONTROLLABLE WORDS...

YOU'VE MADE A FOOL OF ME FOR THE LAST TIME, BRUCE EAGAN! EITHER YOU DO AS I SAY, OR YOU'RE THROUGH HERE...

I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, PAT, BUT YOU CAN'T FIRE ME... YOUR FATHER DID THE HIRING... NOT YOU!



HIS DEFIANT WORDS PRESSING AGAINST MY HEART, I TURNED AND FLED! MY EYES WERE TOO FILLED WITH TEARS TO REALIZE WHERE I WAS GOING... OR TO EVEN KNOW WHAT I WAS SAYING!

I CAN GET RID OF HIM FOR YUH, PAT... JUST GIVE ME THE WORD! IT'LL BE A PLEASURE...

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO... I DON'T WANT TO EVER SEE HIM AGAIN!



YOU HEARD HER, MISTER EAGAN... THE LADY WANTS YOU TO LEAVE... SO GIT!

DON'T START SOMETHING YUH CAN'T FINISH, RIP... THIS IS NONE OF YOUR AFFAIR! KEEP OUT OF IT!



WELL, I'M MAKIN' IT MY AFFAIR!

BRUCE... LOOK OUT!

WHY, YOU...



NOW MAKE TRACKS---OR I WON'T AIM FER YER SHOULDER WITH MUH NEXT SHOT!

WHEN I SAW RIP DRAW HIS GUN I TRIED TO WARN BRUCE, BUT I WAS TOO LATE!

BRUCE... BRUCE! WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU? I DIDN'T WANT THIS TO HAPPEN... I DIDN'T!

I WAS A FOOL, PAT! I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME, BUT I WAS WRONG! YOU LOVE YOUR POWER AND FALSE PRIDE TOO MUCH!



YOU MUSTN'T BELIEVE THAT... YOU CAN'T! I'LL CHANGE, DARLING... GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE... PLEASE...

YOU'LL NEVER CHANGE, PAT... BEST LEAVE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE! YOU WANTED ME TO LEAVE... WELL, THAT'S WHAT I'M DOIN'!



FORGET ABOUT HIM, SUGAR... HE WUZ NO GOOD ANYWAY! HE GOT WHAT ANY YELLA SKUNK DESERVES!

RIP, DON'T! YOU'RE HURTING MY ARM!



LOVE DRAMAS No. 1

BUT RIP WAS IN HIS GLORY, AND THERE WAS NO STOPPING HIM NOW! ...MY HEART FILLED WITH SORROW AND REPENTANCE... I FOUND MYSELF STRUGGLING WITH A MAN I HATED!

NOW, IS THIS WHAT YOU CALL APPRECIATION, AFTER WHAT I DID? C'MON, ACT SOCIABLE!

STOP! LET ME GO!

TAKE YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF HER!



SUDDENLY RIP RELEASED HIS GRIP, AND WHEN I TURNED ABOUT, BRUCE WAS STANDING THERE BEHIND ME! ONCE MORE RIP REACHED FOR HIS GUN, BUT THIS TIME...

BRUCE...

YUH SHOULD'VE FINISHED ME WHEN YUH HAD THE CHANCE!

A-A-CH-G-G!



WITH COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR HIS WOUNDED SHOULDER, BRUCE FOUGHT ON VICIOUSLY...UNTIL, WITH ONE TELLING BLOW, THE FIGHT WAS OVER!

NOW I'M FINISHING YOU!



UNABLE TO FACE BRUCE, I STARTED AWAY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! BUT HE WOULD NOT HAVE IT THAT WAY... REACHING OUT, HE CAUGHT MY ARM...

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

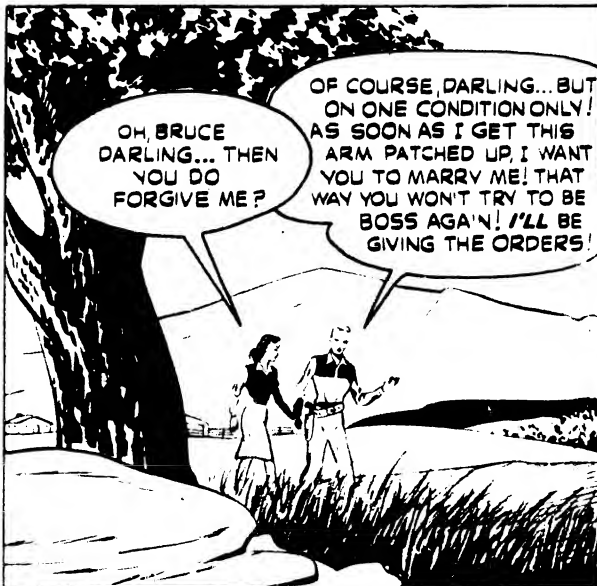


MAYBE YUH DO AND MAYBE YUH DON'T... BUT WHEN I SAW YOU STRUGGLING WITH RIP I KNEW THAT I STILL CARED TOO MUCH... I COULD NEVER LET YOU GO!



OH, BRUCE DARLING... THEN YOU DO FORGIVE ME?

OF COURSE, DARLING... BUT ON ONE CONDITION ONLY! AS SOON AS I GET THIS ARM PATCHED UP I WANT YOU TO MARRY ME! THAT WAY YOU WON'T TRY TO BE BOSS AGAIN! I'LL BE GIVING THE ORDERS!



AND MY FIRST ORDER IS-- KISS ME!



SUDDENLY I REALIZED WHAT A FOOL I HAD BEEN! WHAT DID IT MATTER WHO GAVE THE ORDERS, WHO WAS BOSS? THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT BRUCE WAS MINE, FOREVER!

The End